

Election Accessibility for People with Disabilities

Message from Hawaii's Chief Election Officer

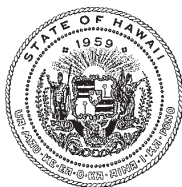
To the voters of the State of Hawaii,

Voting is your right and responsibility. Voting is your opportunity to select your leaders who make important decisions that touch the lives in our community, state, and nation.

In order to vote in the State of Hawaii, one must be a U.S. Citizen at least 18 years of age and a legal resident of the state. To register to vote, complete and submit an Affidavit on Application for Voter Registration to your appropriate City/County Clerk.

The Help America Vote Act of 2002 (HAVA) provides that the voting process, which includes both physical access and voter services, is accessible to people with disabilities. All aspects of the voting process promote private and independent voting, whether it is voter registration, voting on Election Day, or absentee voting.

The goal that we are moving towards and improving on each year, is ensuring that voters with disabilities are able to vote privately and independently, providing equal and meaningful access to the full experience of the voting process. The information enclosed in this brochure is meant to inform and empower voters with disabilities, to make their voices heard through the voting process.



STATE OF HAWAII
OFFICE OF ELECTIONS

Dwayne D. Yoshina
Chief Election Officer
State of Hawaii, Office of Elections



THE HELP AMERICA VOTE ACT (HAVA)

President George W. Bush signed the Help America Vote Act (HAVA) into law on October 29, 2002. Congress authorized \$3.88 billion in federal money to be distributed to all states for election upgrades, including the purchase of new voting machines, the creation of a state-wide voter registration database and other voting improvements.

The State of Hawaii received \$10 million in HAVA funds to improve the administration of elections, including voter education and upgrading voting systems and technology. The 2004 election reflected changes with the use of temporary ramps and accessible parking at the polls, training poll workers on how to assist voters with disabilities, and the use of the Direct Recording Electronic Voting System (DRE) that made the voting process accessible to people with disabilities.

IMPROVING THE ACCESS OF POLLING PLACES FOR PEOPLE WITH DISABILITIES

The Help America Vote Act also helps states to establish, enhance and improve the access to polling places and elections for people with disabilities. This includes people who are blind and visually impaired, Deaf or hard of hearing, and people who have mobility, emotional or cognitive impairments.

The Office of Elections, Office of City/County Clerks, and the Disability and Communication Access Board are working together to make polling places accessible to people with disabilities. Each partner is doing their part to remove program and physical barriers to offer voters with disabilities an equal opportunity for participation as other voters enjoy.

MAKING POLLING PLACES ACCESSIBLE

Polling places throughout the State are being surveyed for accessibility. Polling places will be made more accessible for voters with disabilities on Election Day by:

- Relocating the accessible parking space for people with disabilities closer to the polling place entrance.
- Installing portable curb ramps from the accessible parking area to the sidewalk.
- Posting signs directing people to the accessible parking area and to the polling place entrance.
- Leaving doors to the polling place open and having wide aisles inside for easy access for people who use wheelchairs, walkers or crutches.
- Placing cane detectable barriers under protruding objects and stairways along the route to the polling place for people who are blind or have low vision.
- Having accessible voting booths at polling places.

POLLING PLACE WORKERS ARE TRAINED TO ASSIST PEOPLE WITH DISABILITIES

On Election Day the polling places will have workers who are trained on how to assist voters with disabilities and provide good customer service.

- To provide effective voter assistance, all polling place workers are trained in communicating with and assisting people with disabilities.

- All polling places will have a Voter Assistance Official where voters can request special assistance.

- Each polling place will have an alternate method of voting, other than the paper ballot, such as a Direct Recording Electronic System. However, a person can request assistance when voting with the paper ballot.

- Workers at all polling places are trained to assist voters who are blind to sign the poll book using a signature guide.

- Each polling place will be equipped with auxiliary aids to assist voters, such as magnifiers, signature guides, and Communication Cards for voters who are Deaf or hard of hearing.

- Voters who are blind, have low vision, or have mobility needs will be offered assistance to move safely around the polling place.

- People with mobility impairments, who have difficulty walking or standing, will be offered the option to move to the head of a long voter line.

PROVIDING EQUAL ACCESS AND PARTICIPATION FOR PEOPLE WITH DISABILITIES

Equal access and participation for people with disabilities in the voting process includes being able to vote independently and privately.

- All polling places will have one accessible voting machine. Most people with disabilities who use this voting machine will be able to vote independently and in private.

- Voters who are blind or have low vision and use the accessible voting machine can wear headphones to listen to the ballot being read to them. The controls on the voting machine are easy to operate.

- Voters who have difficulty marking the printed-paper ballot with a pen may use the accessible voting machine with large and light touch controls.

- The accessible voting machine will be located in a private accessible voting booth.



INFORMING PEOPLE WITH DISABILITIES ABOUT THE ACCESSIBILITY OF THE ELECTIONS

Building on the foundation of the outcomes from the 2004 outreach events, informational community workshops will be offered throughout the State to inform voters with disabilities about accessibility in the voting process.

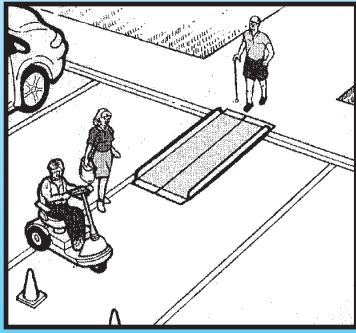
Individuals with disabilities and organizations that serve people with disabilities will conduct these workshops. Listed below are some of the types of disability groups focused on, however, all people with disabilities are welcome to attend.

People with:

- Mobility Impairments
- Blindness or visual impairments
- Deafness or who are hard of hearing
- Mental Illness
- Developmental Disabilities



Standard parking spaces are made into accessible parking. A temporary curb ramp leads to the accessible route to the polling place.



ACCOMMODATIONS

- For people that need accommodations, please call the Office of Elections or your County Clerk's office.
- American Sign Language interpreters are available only for the early walk-in absentee voting process, if you need one please call the County Clerk's office on your island to make your request.

- The Clerk's office will arrange for a credentialed interpreter or other specific request for you.
- To request accommodations, please call at least a week in advance and have the following information ready: your polling location; and the date and time you plan to vote.
- Although each office will attempt to fill your request, resources are limited and dependent on availability. If a resource is not available, alternative methods to fill the need may be used.

PRIMARY AND GENERAL ELECTION

The Primary Election and General Election are held during the Fall of even numbered years. Watch for the specific dates and polling places.

INFORMATION

You may also call the State of Hawaii, Office of Elections for information and assistance at:

Office of Elections

802 Lehua Avenue

Pearl City, HI 96782

Phone: 808-453-VOTE (8683) • 808-453-6150 (TTY)

Neighbor Islands Toll Free: 1-800-442-VOTE (8683)

Neighbor Islands Toll Free: 1-800-345-5915 (TTY)

www.hawaii.gov/elections (web site)



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Please call your City/County Clerk's Office if you have questions about voter registration and your polling place location. This information is available in alternate format by contacting the State of Hawaii, Office of Elections.

Honolulu 523-4293 • 523-4548 (TTY)

Hawaii 961-8277 • 981-5259 (TTY)

Kauai 241-6350 • 241-5116 (TTY)

Maui 270-7749 • 270-7849 (TTY)